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State’s cancer report card shows survival and treatment are improving

The state’s latest cancer report card, released today, shows NSW continues to make important improvements in cancer outcomes.

The Cancer control in NSW: Statewide report 2018 by the Cancer Institute NSW shows cancer outcomes have improved across the board, including the use of hypofractionated radiotherapy, which is recommended internationally as the standard of care for women with early-stage breast cancer who have breast-conserving surgery.

The NSW Government invests about $187 million each year through the Cancer Institute NSW to drive improvement in cancer control in NSW. Chief Cancer Officer and CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW, Professor David Currow, said the funding is lessening the impact of cancer on patients.

“In 2019, more than 47,000 people in NSW will be told they have cancer and there will be more than 15,000 cancer deaths. However, survival has continued to improve for most cancers, as has the number of people taking part in life-saving cancer screening,” Professor Currow said.

“We are pleased to see an increase in the use of hypofractionated radiotherapy, which provides a smaller number of doses while delivering great outcomes. Studies have shown this form of radiotherapy requires fewer visits for patients, reducing the impacts of treatment and lowering healthcare costs.

“The number of enrolments in cancer clinical trials across the state has more than doubled in just four years, along with the number of cancer clinical trials taking place. This shows new approaches to cancer care are being evaluated by people who may benefit from them.”

The Cancer control in NSW: Statewide report 2018 is one product of the Cancer Institute NSW’s Reporting for Better Cancer Outcomes program, which analyses and reports on key cancer control indicators.

“Of course, there is still much work to do in reducing unwarranted variation in cancer care and outcomes. The Cancer Institute NSW will be working with local health services to build on these findings and improve the cancer care, support and information we provide,” Professor Currow said.

“Improving cancer outcomes is a critical undertaking that we’re pursuing in partnership with clinicians, researchers and policy makers. This is a team effort across the entire health sector, both government and non-government, to ensure people with cancer receive the best care no matter where they live and where they are treated.”

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Highlights from the *Cancer control in NSW: Statewide report 2018*:

- 96 per cent of people attending outpatient cancer clinics felt they were ‘always’ treated with respect and dignity.
- The number of people taking part in breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening has increased across most Local Health Districts (LHDs). The highest participation is in rural and regional areas.
- In 2014-17, hypofractionated radiotherapy (a smaller number of doses, each providing a higher amount of radiation) was the most common radiotherapy treatment used for early-stage breast cancer. Its use varied between 26 to 95 per cent across NSW public hospitals.
- More people are having complex cancer surgery in hospitals that perform the procedure more regularly, which leads to better health outcomes.
- The number of cancer clinical trials in NSW increased by 62 per cent from 2014.
- There were 3,924 enrolments in cancer clinical trials, more than double the number of enrolments in 2014.